



HireAbility

Newsletter of the Governor's Committee on Employment and Rehabilitation of People with Disabilities

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The Governor's Committee in October 2001 (Pictured left to right): Larry Hintz, Jackie Bisbee, Tim Weiss, Pam Stratton, Denny Macom, Jack Busteed, Kathy Privratsky, JoAnn McDonald, Ruth L'Hommedieu, Annie Knight, and Velja Elstad, (staff). (not present for the photo were) Jim Shire, Paula Harrison, Duane French, and Reuben Mixsooke

Work Of The Governor's Committee

The Governor's Committee is a non-partisan citizen's advisory group, comprised of volunteers appointed by the Governor of Alaska. These individuals come with various backgrounds from all over the State. Their purpose is to promote and encourage the employment and rehabilitation of Alaskans with disabilities. The current Committee Members are:

Denny Macom—(*Chair of the Committee*) a private business owner/employer from Fairbanks.

Jack Busteed—(*Vice Chair*) a federal employer from Anchorage.

Ruth L'Hommedieu—(*Treasurer*) representative from the State Independent Living Council, from Fairbanks.

Pam Stratton—(*Secretary*) representative of the Client Assistance Program, from Anchorage

Jackie Bisbee—(*Member at Large*) representatives of Section 121 Programs, from Fairbanks.

Duane French—Director of the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) and representative of the State Workforce Investment Board, from Anchorage.

Paul Harrison—employer from Palmer.

Larry Hintz—representative rehabilitation counselor from Fairbanks.

JoAnn McDonald—representing DVR clients, from Anchorage.

Reuben Mixsooke—representing DVR clients from Unalakleet.

Kathy Privratsky—a client advocate, a community rehabilitation representative, and assistive technology coordinator from Anchorage.

Jim Shine—a client advocate and community rehabilitation representative and attorney from Juneau.

Tim Weiss—Parent Training representative from Anchorage.

The Committee works jointly with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) to assess the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities residing in Alaska. It uses the

information it gathers to identify goals and priorities of the State in carrying out the vocational rehabilitation program, and works to enhance employment opportunities.

To accomplish its goals the Committee needs additional volunteers, willing to dedicate some of their time to make a difference. If you are intrigued by what the Committee does, and if you would like to join us, contact Velja at 1-800-478-2815 for more information and an application packet.

Community-Based Assessments

The goal of the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation is to assist individuals with disabilities in their effort to enter, remain, or re-enter the workforce so that they may live independently in their daily lives. The community-based assessment program is one tool that allows DVR and employers to work together on this goal. Employers provide occupational information that can be of value to the DVR clients, training, and trial work experience. This last piece provides benefits for everyone concerned. Trial work experience enables the Division to really assess a client's ability to perform in a real life work situation. It provides the client with work experience that they can add to their resume, and an opportunity to prove what they can accomplish if given a chance. The placements provide a trained temporary employee at no cost to the employer.

The program includes young adults who are transitioning from high school, all the way to older individuals who are approaching retirement. All the employer is asked to provide is a worksite, typical work duties, supervision of individual, and to provide the Division with feedback on the employee's work style, interest and competence. The Division will provide assistive technology for the employee (if needed) and ongoing support. After the assessment period has been completed, the employer is under no further obligation. However, many employers have been so pleased with the results of some trial work assessments, that they have offered the individual's permanent jobs. If you

are an employer with work that needs to get done (and who isn't) consider contacting the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation to see if the Community-Based Assessment might work for you....and think of the opportunity you might give to someone else!

For more information on the Community-Based Assessments contact the DVR Career and Counseling Center at 3600 S. Bragaw, Anchorage, Alaska 99508. You may also contact Barbara Doran at (907) 269-2068, or Gloria Lewellyn at (907) 269-2071.

NEWS FLASHES:

Rural Business Opportunity Program Funds Available.

Public bodies, nonprofits, tribes and coops can apply for grants from USDA's Rural Business-Cooperative Service for economic development activities such as planning, technical assistance and training. Deadline is June 30. For more information see the Federal Register, 2/25/02, pp. 8515-17 or Contact a Rural Development state office for details. Or go on-line to <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rd/nofas/index.html>.

Economic Development Administration Accepting Proposals.

EDA will make grants to nonprofits working with government entities, to state and local governments and to tribes for infrastructure development, planning, technical assistance and other activities to benefit areas with "substantial economic distress." Proposals will be accepted until funds are spent. See Federal Register, 3/1/02, pp. 9543-50 or contact an EDA regional office.

Smart Growth Featured In Rural Voices.

Hac's Quarterly Magazine examines connections between growth management and affordable rural housing. Subscribers' copies are in the mail. The magazine is also available free at <http://www.ruralhome.org/pubs/ruralvoc.htm> or from Luz Rosas, HAC, 202-842-8600, luz@ruralhome.org.

Telephone Access For People With Speech Disabilities

If you have a speech disability and live in one of the 38 states or the District of Columbia that offer this service, you can now use a new, free telephone service 24 hours a day. This service, called Speech to Speech (STS), provides communication assistants (CAs) for people with difficulty being understood by the public on the telephone.

The FCC ruled that STS must be available nationwide in March 2001. STS will be provided through the TTY relay in each state. Unlike TTY, STS enables people with speech disabilities to communicate by voice through a CA as many people with speech disabilities have difficulty typing.

People with speech disabilities can dial toll free to reach a patient, trained CA who is familiar with many speech patterns and has excellent language recognition skills. This CA makes telephone calls for them and repeats their words exactly in a 3-way calling environment. Every month users make about 6,000 calls nationally. STS is the only way for many people to telephone others not accustomed to their speech. Many STS users have Parkinson's disease, cerebral palsy, ALS, multiple sclerosis, or muscular dystrophy. Other users stutter or have had a laryngectomy. STS also helps some speech synthesizer users.

Bob Segalman, Ph.D. has cerebral palsy and developed the concept of STS. Now it makes telephone use much easier for him. To try out STS, report problems or get more information: Call 800-854-7784 and ask for Dr. Bob Segalman (direct 916-263-8689) or e-mail him at: bsegalma@dor.ca.gov You may also visit the STS website: <http://www.stsnews.com/> or contact Katherine Keller at stslistserv@stsnews.com to place you on the STS list serve. Bob is gathering support letters to insure that STS and STS Outreach are implemented in all 50 states. If you're willing to sign such a letter please e-mail him at: bsegalma@dor.ca.gov and request a draft. For a list of U. S. Speech-to-Speech access numbers go to:

<http://www.stsnews.com/Pages/STSDial-UpTelnumbers.html>

Do You Know a Business or Individual Who Deserves Recognition?

Each year the Governor's Committee on Employment & Rehabilitation of People with Disabilities will honor special individuals, businesses and organizations because of their contributions to the disabled of Alaska. They can be role models, managers who have recognized the needs of the disabled public and taken steps to provide accessibility, or even providers of services to the disabled who have demonstrated dedication and service above and beyond the normal. These individuals are identified by you, the public. If you would like to nominate a candidate for next year's awards, or would just like to find out more about the awards program, contact Velja Elstad at 1-800-478-2815, or on the Governor's Committee Website at:

www.labor.stste.ak.us/govscomm/index.html.

Upcoming Meetings

The Governor's Committee meets once every three months at various locations around Alaska. All meetings are open to the public and everyone is invited to listen to the meetings and have their public testimony heard on the first evening at each location. The next scheduled meeting of the Governor's Committee on Employment and Rehabilitation of People with Disabilities will be held in Soldotna on June 19th through the 19th, 2002. And following meetings are planned for October 15-17 in Anchorage, And in 2003, the Committee will meet in Juneau on January 22-24, in Bethel on April 16-18, Fairbanks in June 18-20, and again in Anchorage on October 15-17. Public testimony is generally held at 4:30 p.m, on the first day of each meeting. Check local papers for public announcements giving the exact time and location of each meeting

Governor's Committee on Employment and Rehabilitation of People with Disabilities

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